

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9429

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECON, PGOV, HA

SUBJECT: FRANCOIS MURAT INSTALLED AS NEW COMMERCE SECRETARY

REF: PAUP 568, 552, 551

1. INTERIOR SECRETARY PAUL BLANCHET PRESIDED OVER A BRIEF CEREMONY MARCH 11 INSTALLING FRANCOIS MURAT AS THE NEW COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY SECRETARY. MURAT REPLACES DR. SERGE FOURCAND, REMOVED FROM OFFICE MARCH 8 SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF A SCANDAL INVOLVING THE ISSUANCE AND SALE OF A FRAUDULENT SERIES OF HAITIAN POSTAGE STAMPS (REFTELS).

2. IN HIS BRIEF REMARKS AT THE CEREMONY, BLANCHET REMINDED HIS AUDIENCE OF PRESIDENT DUVALIER'S "ECONOMIC BATTLE" TO ASSURE THE WELL-BEING OF THE HAITIAN PEOPLE AND THE "MORAL VALUES" NECESSARY TO THIS EFFORT. HE NOTED THAT MURAT'S PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE AS THE NATIONAL BANK'S COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR MADE HIM PARTICULARLY WELL SUITED TO CARRY OUT THE PRESIDENT'S AIMS.

3. MURAT EXPRESSED HIS DETERMINATION TO CARRY OUT NATIONAL OBJECTIVES IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD, AND SPOKE OF CREATING AN "ATMOSPHERE CONDUCIVE TO DEVELOPMENT". HE SAID FACTORS ENCOURAGING SUCH DEVELOPMENT INCLUDED PRICE STABILITY, MORE LIBERAL CREDIT TERMS, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FREE CURRENCY CONVERTIBILITY, IMPROVED SALARIES, PROTECTING

LOCAL INDUSTRY, TRANSFORMING LOCAL RAW MATERIALS INTO MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS, AND EQUITABLE PRODUCT DISTRIBUTION AMONG CONSUMERS. MURAT ASSURED BUSINESSMEN AND INDUSTRIALISTS THAT LIBERTY IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE WILL LEAD TO A "CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE," ADDING THAT ECONOMIC CONTROLS CALLED FOR BY LAW WILL BE OBJECTIVELY ADMINISTERED AND THAT PROTECTION TO STIMULATE GREATER NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY WOULD BE IMPOSED IN AN ENLIGHTENED MANNER.

4. COMMENT: MURAT'S EMPHASIS ON MORALITY AND OBJECTIVITY IS NOT SURPRISING FOR ONW WHOSE PREDECESSOR WAS SEEMINGLY REMOVED FOR CORRUPTION. HIS REMARKS ON THE ECONOMIC POLICIES OF THE GOH SUGGEST MODERATION, BUT ALSO A CONCERN TO STIMULATE LOCAL INDUSTRY AND SAGGING INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL EMPLOYMENT, AND POSSIBLY TO BOOST WAGE SCALES TO CATCH UP WITH INFLATION. HE OMITTED DIRECT REFERENCES TO THE ROLE OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT, BUT IS BELIEVED FAVORABLE TO RESPONSIBLE FOREIGN INVESTORS. AMBASSADOR MADE INITIAL CALL ON MURAT MARCH 13 AND FOUND HIM COOLY PROFESSIONAL AND MANIFESTLY INTENT ON RESTORING CONFIDENCE BOTH OF HAITIAN AND US BUSINESSMEN IN DEPT. OF COMMERCE. MURAT, WHILE LACKING FOURCAND'S FLAIR, SHOULD PROVE A MORE RESPONSIBLE AND STEADY INTERLOCUTOR.

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